

Soo language

Soo or **So** is the Kuliak language of the Tepes people of northeastern Uganda. The language is moribund, with most of the population of 5,000 having shifted to Karamojong, and only a few dozen elderly individuals are still able to speak Soo. Soo is divided into three major dialects: Tepes, Kadam (Katam), and Napak (Yog Toji).

There are between 3,000 and 10,000 ethnic Soo people (Carlin 1993). They were historically hunter-gatherers, but have recently shifted to pastoralism and subsistence farming like their Nilotic and Bantu neighbors.^[3] Beer (2009: 2) found that most So villages have only one speaker remaining. Thus, the speakers rarely have a chance to active use the Soo language.

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Dialects

Soo dialects are spoken on the slopes of the following three mountains in east-central Uganda just to the north of Mount Elgon.^[4]

- **Tepes dialect** (also called **Tepeth**), on the slopes of Mount Moroto in Moroto District, Uganda. It is spoken in the Kakingol, Lea, and Tapac valleys on the slopes the Mount Moroto.^[5] The dominant language in the area is Karimojong. Most Tepes people have assimilated both linguistically and culturally with the Karimojong people.^[6] Villages include Akeme, Nabuin, and Mokora,^[7] as well as Naripo Kakole.^[8]
- **Kadam dialect**, on the slopes of Mount Kadam in Nakapiripirit District, Uganda. Villages include Nakapelieth and Nakaapiripirit.^[9] Kadam data is primarily available in Heine (m.s.).^[10] The dominant language in the area is Pokot.^[11] According to Carlin (1993), Mount Kadam has the highest concentration of ethnic So people.
- **Napak dialect**, on the slopes of Mount Napak in Napak District, Uganda (no speakers found as of 1993).

There are fewer than 60 elderly speakers of all three dialects combined.^[12]

Soo	
Tepes	
Region	Uganda
Ethnicity	5,000 (2007) ^[1]
Native speakers	50 (2012) ^[1]
Language family	Nilo-Saharan? <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Kuliak<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Soo
Dialects	Tepes <div>Kadam</div> <div>Napak</div>
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	teu
Glottolog	sooo1256 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/sooo1256) ^[2]



Carlin (1993: 2-3) notes that there are only minor differences between the Tepes and Kadam dialects, which are mutually intelligible.

Grammar

So grammar has been described by Beer, et al. (2009).^[13]

Word order is VSO (verb–subject–object). So has rich verbal morphology.^[13]

Pronouns

So nominative and accusative pronouns are:^[13]

	Singular	Plural
1st	aja	inja/izja
2nd	bija	bitja
3rd	ica	i ʔa

Interrogatives

So interrogatives are:^[13]

- Who/What: /ic/
- When: /ita/
- Where: /eoko/
- Why: /ikun/
- How: /gwate/
- How Many/How Much: /intanac/

Tenses

There are four verb tenses:^[13]

- past tense
- present tense
- future tense (general)
- future tense (specific)

Affixes

Some So affixes are:^[13]

- /kɔ-/: immediate future
- /-ak/: passivity
- /no-/: relative clause coordinator

- /ɪn-/: general negation
- /lan/: past negation
- /ipa/: imperative negation
- /-tɛz/: inchoative marker
- /-uk/: locative marker
- /-ok/: instrumentive marker
- /-a/: goal marker
- /kun-/: dative pronouns
- /-ak/: dative pronouns

Singular suffixes are /-at/, /an/, /-ɛn/, and /-it/.

Plural suffixes are /-in/, /-ɛk/, /-ɛz/, /-an/, /-ɛl/, /-ra/, /-ce/, /-ɔt/, and /-e/.

References

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3. Beer (2009: 1)
4. Carlin, Eithne. 1993. *The So Language*. (Afrikanistische Monografien (AMO), 2.) Institut für Afrikanistik, Universität zu Köln.
5. Beer (2009: 2)
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